

Forging African Unity in a Globalizing World: A Challenge for Postcolonial Nation-Building

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the dilemma of African unity against the background of the multiplicity of political interests and agenda. It examines this in the context of the African Union and its sub-regional groupings and in relation to the diverse competing interests, internally and externally. It argues that the ongoing unity efforts have been simplified and enmeshed in a return to a tradition that from the onset had not understood the complexities of the continent and its history. It shows that the complex mix of forces confronting modern African states today, can only be understood within the context of history and the lived realities of the people caught in its tracks. Hence, such political action needs to be informed and shaped by the radical ideological framings of the early nationalist and post-colonialist thinking reflected in the projects of Conscientization, Ujaama, Harambee and Negritude. Such efforts had blended African traditionalism with modernism to rebuild the fragmented and distorted communities that Africa's colonization had created. It concludes on a critical pan-Africanist argument that unless the current African leadership extricates its thinking and actions from the colonial binds including its newest allies, globalization and developmentalism, in order to embrace a critical postcolonial framework in the on-going nation-building efforts, the unity talks would be in vain.

KEY WORDS: Pan-Africanism, African Unity, traditionalism, Post/colonialism, Nationalism

INTRODUCTION

Balkanized, fragmented, fractured and distorted, are a few of the qualifiers of some anti-colonial, Africanist and postcolonial criticism of Africa's experience of colonization^[2, 5, 21]. During the First African Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora in 2004 in Dakar Senegal, the picture of a wounded Africa was played out, over and over again, to explain the slow pace of development. Perhaps, President Yoweri Musevi of Uganda's treatise underscored best the role of balkanization in the slow pace of the continent's growth. In that speech, he drew parallels to the United States of America (USA) and China and how they had made good their economies of scale to demonstrate how the distortion of traditional social structures and fragmentation of Africa had weakened its negotiation power. Yet, was Africa ever a unitary whole even in its traditional past? Can Africans claim a past that was unified in spite of its diverse politics and peoples? To what extent can the ongoing reclamation effort dwell on such claim and of what worth is that claim for Africa's futures? While supporting the agenda of unification, inarguably Africa's pre-colonial past was diverse and not a unified whole. The emergence and opulence of diverse kingdoms and ethnicities that existed side by side in those days, did not model uniformity but co-operation and co-existence. It was diversity rather than uniformity that gave birth to the powerful kingdoms, rich cultures and innovative institutions and structures of Africa. Therefore, that complex African heritage which has been achieved through what is now feared by modern (read contemporary) Africa because of diversity has become a basis for regression. While that past was not without its own share of woes as empire-building had its own violations and injustices, the achievements of those times should spur on Africa to unity in diversity in the form of regionalism and integration. The pan-Africanist agenda has been driven by an appreciation of unity in diversity rather than the uniformity often suggested by some African leaders in order to explain away Africa's woes while stalling unity talks. It is thus proposed that the independent era nationalists recognised that early in their struggles in their proposition for a United States of Africa, a proposal which remains relevant today and should guide ongoing efforts on regional cooperation and continental integration. Indeed, as eloquently pointed out by Chachage^[6], there have been differences in thinking on the form of a united Africa rather than the need for it. While Nkrumah, then president of Ghana, pressed for a radical revolutionary united Africa now, Nyerere of Tanzania and many other leaders felt African unification should be gradual. Although the gradualist won at the end of the day, what win might that claim be when for over fifty years we have been marking time on gradualism? Nkrumah and his radical instantists did not lose out Africa did. To date the colonialists continue to take advantage of the lack of unity to continue to plunder Africa's resources while majority of its people live in poverty and squalor. The reform of the Organization of

African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2002 was meant to expedite action on African Unity but that was 14 years ago. What has happened?

Far back in the 19th century, during the 1888 Berlin Conference, Africa's lands, together with its peoples and property, were shredded and shared by foreign powers resulting in the widespread pillage and plundering of all of its resources in the name of so-called civilization and modernization. The vast and diverse yet unexplored rich resources of the African continent were easy attractions for the colonial predators. The civilizing mission of Europe, in the form of the westernization of African peoples, who then held on to their rich ancient traditions and charted their own unique pathways of modernization became the target of the cultural genocide that accompanied colonization. Not only were African worldviews and ways of life considered uncivil requiring Western-style modernization, but also the continent's resources were targeted for the Western model of modernization. The results of such violations are not just the ever lingering socio-economic challenges that the continent continually face but also the fragmented and distorted identities and disfigured citizenry with their attendant complicated, often conflicting loyalties, interests, agenda and even identities. Through settlement, occupation and association, the modernizing mission of the West has ended in the plundering of African human and material resources and implanted controversial structures and systems leaving in their wake the hurts and wounds that continue to drive conflicts and violent outbursts on the continent. Yet, in present time, through international trade, development aid and development cooperation similar hurts and wounds are perpetuated and even sustained. Globalization and developmentalism have become the modernizing tools vigorously ploughing away Africa's human and material resources. Token efforts such as economic recovery, structural adjustments, highly indebted poor country initiatives, accelerated growth and opportunities for Africa and foreign direct investment had largely tended to further disenfranchise Africa and African rather than promote the promised growth.^[19, 5]

In today's globalizing world, where economic integration has meant not just the elimination of market barriers but also the increasing disappearance of geographical boundaries in trade relations, the situation of Africa has been compounded. Through technological transfer, development cooperation and assistance, many African nations find themselves at the receiving end of programmes that weaken internal controls and restrict endogenous initiatives. Multilateral and bilateral relationships have resulted in the implementation of programmes that widen the reach of external partners while weakening intra and inter African cooperation. Under the structural adjustment programmes, widely implemented by African states in the 1980s and 1990s, the poverty reduction strategies that replaced them and the now new aid modalities, the neo-liberal agenda have and continue to yield mixed outcomes. Growth in gross domestic products, infrastructure development and improved social services have been accompanied by the shrinking of local enterprise, increasing environmental degradation, loss of national autonomy and widening inequalities. Progress in the socio-economic growth of African nations has been at great cost. Africa's so-called successes under adjustments have visited on the beneficiaries grave socio-economic injustices with far reaching implications for sovereignty, autonomy and identity of the individual nations and the continent as a whole. Such initiatives continue to erode the continent's pride of place in the world polity. Its fortunes continue to decline as a respectable and effective geo-political bloc. These challenges have been cited time and again as compelling reasons for African unity^[12, 5, 10]. Indeed, this situation underpinned and gave rise to the pan-Africanist struggles. Such realization gave cause for the first Pan-African Conference which was held in London in 1900 at the instance of Henry Sylvester-Williams^[19, 20]. Over a century later, Africa has still not settled on how to proceed and remains divided: the instantists versus gradualists, progressives versus conservatives and radicalisms and practicality; as if this was something new. There is a lot of talk but action remains slow. Donald Kaberuka, a former president of the African Development Bank has asserted that:

The 'decades-long prevarication' to implement real economic integration, despite ambitious documents ranging from the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 to those establishing the New Partnership for Africa's Development in 2000, has had a devastating effect on the continent. Intra-African trade- the theme of two AU summits in 2012- remains lower than that of any other continent.^[8]

While exogenous factors continue to dominate explanations, it is also clear that endogenous factors contribute significantly to derail progress. As Kabureka has explained, the mere lack of continental strategies on the airline industry alone has made travelling elsewhere cheaper than in Africa^[8].

Even as exogenous factors present their own challenges, Africa and Africans have in many ways not only extended but also created their own demons. The continued allegiances, the struggles over resources and the deeply divisive and unhealthy identity politics, some of which have led to genocidal outbursts can be attributed to, among others, the misguided parochial interests and identity reclamation struggles by segments or entire

populations, internally or cross-border. Internally, Ghana, Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Congo and; externally, Nigeria and Cameroun, Somalia and Ethiopia, have been some of the hotspots. Yet, the continued interest and agenda clashes, all over the African continent, were much anticipated in the post-independence unity efforts starting from Ghana's independence to the first Addis Ababa summit of 1963 and beyond.

The independence declaration speech of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, was steeped in post-colonial identity politics of emancipation, nation-building and pan-Africanism. The independence decade of the 1960s and the struggles before it, in the 1940s and 1950s, were all steeped in pan-Africanism. At that time, the agenda was set. The anti-colonial struggles were also struggles for African unity. Africanists on the continent and beyond mobilized in various ways and levels to chart an agenda for rebuilding a united Africa, where its destiny would be in the hands of Africans. A new Africa was anticipated that was not only politically free from the shackles of Europe or any others, but also modern and able to champion its own course of development. This presupposed a break away from the colonial tradition to one where modern Africa was liberated and united.

In 2004, when the First Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora was held from 6th to 9th October in Dakar, Senegal, the subject of African unity was couched in a language of modernity. In his speech, then chairperson Konare paid glowing tribute, among others, to African "resistance" while inviting the intellectual community to think with critical minds and new modalities that should invent an African modernity. I argue that at that time and space a refreshing tradition was invented with modernity as its agenda. Unity talks on and in Africa are thus not new. The 2004 meeting was one of many. Unity talks have almost become ritual for African leaders, who meet, consider positions, share their anxieties and close as divided as from start. The 2007 and 2008 and beyond African Summits were no exceptions. How is it possible for Africa to spend over 50 years trying to unite when all that is done is the return to divisiveness in the blocs that continue to characterise and stall the concretization of African unity? What is it that a modernizing Africa requires that is yet to be articulated in the age-old pan-Africanist struggle? What type of modernity is being sought in an Africa where retrogressive rituals have an insane staying power? This is a challenge that needs critical interrogation.

In this paper, I examine efforts at African unity against the background of the multiplicity of political interests and agenda. I examine this in the context of the African Union and sub-regional groups in relation to the varying political interests such as donors, multi-laterals and bilaterals. I argue that the ongoing unity efforts have been enmeshed in a self-perpetuating myth and protectionist divisiveness ritual defiant of progress. It suffers a paralysis that stalls progress in the ways that it lacks the vim of the struggle at its genesis. I argue that for progress to be achieved, we must of necessity break away from that newly acquired debilitating tradition in order to return to the early pan-Africanist tradition; which understood the historical complexities and social diversity of the continent. I show that issues of statism, ethnicity and colonialism, which confront modern African states today, are not new and can only be understood within the context of history and the lived realities of the peoples caught in its entrapments. Hence, such political talk needs to be informed and shaped by the radical ideological framings of the nationalist, early post-colonial era and the projects of Negritude, Conscientization, Ujaama and Harambee. Such efforts, in West and East Africa, I argue, blended African traditionalism with modernity to rebuild the fragmented and fractured communities that colonization engendered to simplify and vilify African diversities and complexities.

The paper interrogates the question of tradition and modernity as two concepts that are intricately linked in change processes with incrementally reinforcing effects but which are often set in diametrical oppositionality to paralyze action. It also examines the pan-Africanist project and its place in the African unity efforts. It demonstrates that from the onset, an agenda of unity underpinned the nationalistic liberatory discourse. It advocates for a break away from traditions that are rooted in self-serving destructive rhetoric and rooted in parochial individualism in order to enable the embrace of a progressive perspective of tradition that foster section toward strategic change and collective responsibility. It draws examples from the Negritude, Conscientization, Ujaama and Harambee traditions as political agenda and relevant learning points for contemporary unity efforts. In addition, it examines the current unity talks: what they hold for Africa's future and how they might shift from paralysis to action by learning from the well-established pan-Africanist traditions. Issues about colonial allegiances and their shaping of the new Africa are discussed in the context of finding newly inspired pan-Africanist pathways. It concludes that modern Africa's future lies in its ability to learn from its traditions, one rooted in unity in diversity and in ways devoid of mere rhetoric.

The paper is based on a contextual analyses that draw on concept and content analyses techniques to examine existing literature. It is framed by critical postcolonial analysis which is premised on complexity, eclecticism, multi-perspectivalism and shaped by a liberatory agenda. The analyses are presented in sections covering a

revisitation of the concepts of tradition and modernity followed by an analysis of Pan-Africanism in the context of African regionalism ending on an examination of African futures and post-colonialism.

Tradition and Modernity Revisited

Discourses on Africa's growth and development are often steeped in its cultural history and, rightfully so, in ways meant to set it apart from other regions of the world but especially so from Europe and the West. For Africanist scholars, such as Franz Fanon, Kwesi Kra Prah, Masizi Kunene, P. Tiyaambe Zeleza, Ali Mazuri, Claude Ake, Thandika Nkandawire, G. Sefa Dei, Ama Mazama, Molefi Kete Asante, Catherine Odora Hoppers and Oyeronke Oyewumi, among many, that departure does not just establish difference or even dissonance but also liberates scholarship and African people from imperial representations and dominations. They argue that it liberates scholarship, especially that of the West, from its distorted histories and fragmentation of identities through deliberate othering. Coming from a past where African peoples and cultures have been misunderstood and misrepresented and their histories told from a distance, for right or wrong reasons, Africanists must rightfully take their place in the world stage and embark on a re/telling of their stories from within in order to set the records straight. Not only have such Africanists been interested in repositioning Africa in the world stage as a credible participant in global civilization, there have been direct efforts to legitimize and revalorize African traditions as unique and diverse. Such efforts seek to position African as the main driver of the continent's modernization, as distinct from but connected to the West and/or East. Consequently, discourses on and about African development, which blame its failures on imperialism, have often been framed in a naïve return to cultural traditions or indigenous knowledge systems. These radical, neo-traditionalist efforts have been fraught with problems especially when they have led to paralysis or morbidity. They have tended to take on a form rightly identified by Setunya Mosime (2010) as renegade neo-traditionalism.¹

While the return to African roots continues to dominate anti-imperialist scholarship, and rightfully so, its utilization for parochial political interests is troubling. The trouble presents in two ways. First, against the background of the dynamics of contemporary times, they do not only fail to address Africa's own growth and resilience but also lack an appreciation of the continent's history and a historicization of its past against the present and future. Second, when the flight to tradition becomes a matter of political expediency and selective allegiance, they do not only render suspect the motives of the flyer, low or high, but also become the basis for discursive paralysis. The insecurities and violence in many African countries today have been traced to such selfish elite manipulations of ethnic pluralism for parochial political gains.^[14, 16] Yet, this is only an extension of similar manipulations of the colonial past, against which the post-colonial state purports to stand in contention. Through their manipulative indirect, and even direct, rule and associationist policies in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, the British colonial administration perpetrated and endeared traditional authorities to its regime and thus succeeded in entrenching its hold on those African people of their so-called overseas territories. On their part, through assimilationist policies, citizenship became the allure of the French colonialists for baiting and co-opting the educated elites of Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Guinea to the side of the "master" and of imperialism. The elite chiefs and scholars put their parochial interests above that of their peoples; their dignity, rights and well-being. Yet others such as Cheik Anta Diop and Sekou Toure chose a path of dissidence and reactionism in their struggle to pull their people out of the new form of enslavement, a cultural imperialism.

Today, in an era of postcolonial² state, these same compromised elites use various means to perpetuate their selfish interests at the expense of their states and continent. Through nepotism, patrimony, despotism and patriarchy, African politicians build patronage to entrench themselves in office. In both cases, under colonial and post-colonial regimes, divide and rule tactics have become successful manipulative destabilizing tool for setting one group apart from and against another. In the end, this divisiveness becomes a weapon for fomenting and entrenching one crisis after another. Undoubtedly, the modern African state has been built on its past traditions including its colonial past. The postcolonial appeal is the challenge to knead both histories strategically to the inurement of benefit rather than losses.

At independence when the early nationalists sought for African versions of governance, they found socialism a plausible alternative due to its proximity to the framing of African communal values while growing (developing) from them. The versions that emerged in East Africa such as Ujaama and Harambee (to be elaborated in a later section) built on traditional values with the view to improving the lots of all and not some or even set one group apart or against another. Yet, the return to traditionalism, i.e. neo-traditionalism, makes sense in a fractured continent which has been consumed by ill-informed individualism and materialism in the form of

¹In examining, voyeuristic returns to traditionalism in Botswana in time of HIV/AIDS, S. Mosime argues that violence have been visited on women in the form of rape and beatings. As well, rationality has been traded for brutal resistance, which she calls renegade neo-traditionalism.

²Used in a narrow sense to refer to after colonialism and without the criticalness in its broad sense.

the insane obsession with misguided statism, ethnocentrism and traditionalism in the name of autonomy. We can at least figure out what modernization and its related word modernity are derived; what it has been; but can we say exactly what it is? I argue that the same applies to traditionalism, new and old, and its related words.

Traditionalism and modernism are two concepts that are often presented as diametrically opposed. Yet these concepts are intricately related as complements rather than oppositionalities. Hence, both concepts should be appealing in the search for practical action and responses such as those presented in Africa's development. A senior colleague and director of the Institute of Ayurveda and Indigenous Medicine in Bangalore, India, who has been vehemently opposed to attempts to split tradition and modernity argues that the "modern is emerging tradition."^[17] He explains that what is modern is change that sets a new tradition. Indeed, the collective productions of a people result in incremental change that shifts them from one position to another. Tradition and modernity are thus different stages of a continuum, one propelling, resulting in and implicating the other. They constantly trade places as change happens. This is a constantly interactive, iterative and transitional process that is hardly stable although it entails some of the linearity of westernized modernization.

In the context of African unity, many of the early nationalists and pan-Africanists understood that our past traditions should serve as strong basis for integration and regionalism. They foresaw and drew on a case where modernity could build on and evolve from tradition. Here, I want to present tradition as a rallying point from which action exudes. This notion has been articulated by Katarxis as follows:

Tradition and modernity are not contradictory or exclusive. They are merely two different classes of things which can however interact beneficially. Tradition is still very often considered as a "thing of the past" without any contemporary legitimacy, and modernity is often mistakenly considered as modernism. ... the "contemporary", the "modern" and the "traditional" are defined in a context of practice of "virtue" and in the perspective of the "good life", based on the potentials of our time, and the selected wisdom of past times.^[19]

The former is the appeal of this analysis while arguing that the later is characteristic of the western sense of modernization. This fluid notion of the traditional and the modern offers possibilities that are mutually beneficial. It enables the forging of connections between the past and the present; an appreciation of history, in ways leading to renewal and growth. I argue that this is what has been intended in efforts such as the Ujamaa and Harambee as well as in critical Africanist discourses. It is a post-colonial position that should challenge the neo-traditionalist sentiments of current African leaders in the search for an alternative paradigm to violent westocentric development, pejoratively called developmentalism; that which is forced on and not emergent from natural and culturally-inspired and relevant processes of change.

For the purposes of their paper, this notion of modernity offers two probable readings: one Africanist the other Westernist. For the Western sense, where the journey to modernity has entailed a specific project of denying the past, a cautionary note of relevance is sounded. But for the Africanist, the note is one of taking a progressive reading of the traditional. As already noted above, Africanists, whether academicians or politicians, consider a return to the past as a political project of self-reclamation and departure for imperialism^[7]. The argument is however one of whether that past remains static and whether the persistent romanticization of that past is realistic in the face of evidence of a progressive African past that compares and even sometimes surpasses the West. That would be an engagement of the romantic. Africanists such as Molefi Kete Asante, Van Sertima, Gloria Emegwali and G. Sefa Dei project what I call a radical rendition of a progressive African nationalism with people and nations in fluidity rather than the fixity implied by Africanist romantics. Yet, their radical renditions of Africa's progressive past is often misconstrued and misused in a retrogressive manner.

For instance, in Claude Ake's *Democracy and Development in Africa*, he shows that Africa's attempts at development has been anon-start not just for their imperialist politics but also the failure by African states to set their priorities right. Ake raises the two issues of patronage and parochialism as the bane. In the process, he is not only critical of the persistent conflicts and their inherent contradictions which paralyse actions but also the inability of African states to seek strategic interests that can progressively drive their political and socio-economic interests. By extension African leaders have either been over zealous modernists devoid of their traditions or irrational traditionalists steeped in parochialism. He offers an alternative that calls for a blend of the traditional and the modern as follows:

At the beginning of the independence period, African leaders, with few exceptions, were so absorbed in the struggle for power and survival and so politically isolated by their betrayal of the nationalist revolution that they could not launch a national development project but instead opted for dependent

development, letting their metropolitan patrons determine the agenda and find the resources to implement it. Thus, policymaking was largely divorced from political responsibility and development strategy was dissociated both from social needs and from the cultural and historical realities of the developing society. This dissociation led to development policies that have been more disruptive than developmental. Development could not proceed in a situation in which the national leadership had no vision or agenda of its own and relied on outsiders.^[5]

What is clear from Ake's analysis above, is the need to understand the exigencies of contemporary Africa, not merely in the context of their past but also of the present, both of which are relevant for shaping Africa's futures. Ake's was not a proposal for African leaders to turn their republics into monarchies where patronage looms large. Of course, it is a good example of the Africanization of Western democracies into monarchies! Like the West, kings and chiefs are for life and are made by birth but even so they have to wait their turn to rule. Self-perpetuating rule cannot count as democratic. Yet, in Togo and the DR Congo today this has already happened as the older Gnaissingbes and Kabelas have perpetrated themselves through their sons. In Senegal, Egypt, South African and Nigeria, the once revered African democrats were on the verge of despotism but for the outcry and reaction of their people. Others like Paul Bier of Cameroun, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, once heroes of the liberatory movement now persist in unleashing untold hardships on their people with their extended stay and hold on power. Africa has also had its fill of despots such as Gnaissing be Eyadema of Togo, Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire and Iddi Amin of Uganda. Others such as Yahaya Jammeh of Gambia have not only been blatant but have been heavy-handed in suppressing decent and pillaging public resources. The question that remains however is whether that is the path African leaders want to follow in this era of increasing modernization and collective consciousness?

Africa's traditional heritage forms the basis of its identity; that which distinguishes it from non- Africans. It constitutes the foundation of a unique identity that has been shaped by not just settlement but by the realities of the clashes of various cultures resulting in cross-fertilization and renewals that can only be conceived of as the fusion of complementing cultures. This has been captured by Africanist scholars as unity in diversity borne out of a multiplex heritage that gives rise to the forging of integration. Thus, to speak of Africa and its traditions as if there is one Africa is to deny difference and the very basis for appealing to tradition; that which is based on diverse cultures and peoples.^[10, 2]

Often those who take a static view of the traditional in Africa imply two things: First, that Africa means black Africa and by extension that skin pigmentation is the most important bond for forging that identity. It also suggests that those Africans who are not black, if ever acknowledged, are not real Africans. Hence, the Arab north or even the South Asians or even white or mixed race Africans are not African enough. Yet, this is the reality of Africa today. As a multi-racial, multi-ethnic continent, deliberately engineered or not, this is the character of contemporary Africa and any moves at unity must first reckon this in addition to that of the multiplicity of countries with their diverse ethnicities, governments and peoples as truly African in heritage. The nationalist fighters did not exclude the Arab north. Leaders such as Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat were at the forefront during the foundational phase. Even when they took a position on apartheid South Africa, it was for majority rule and the liberation of an African state comprising Asians who had been forcefully removed from their roots to Africa, whose ancestors had laboured to move Africa that far and who have suffered perhaps not the same fate but similar humiliations as Africans as slaves, indentured labour and low class people. The great Nelson Mandela, a bantu, was thrown into the same jail with Estrada, a non-bantu, to do their time with hard labour.

The second is the tendency of what, for want of words, I will call the ethnicization of Africa. The is notion of Africans as culturally stilled ethnic people who have not been touched by modernity and for that matter remain unscathed by external forces and factors. There is an apparent Puritanism that is based on origins, roots and closeness with nature. A picture is often painted using characteristics such as traditional believers, rural dwelling and simple living. Such traditional Africans cannot be Christians or Muslims, schooled, urbanized or even operate in the formal system. Such characterization has been used to epitomize traditionalism in contradistinction from modernity. The reality, however, is that there are no such Africans any more. Perhaps, they were there before, in the very far past, but have not been so for a long time now. The Africans of today are both of nature and of culture. Hence, in the new configurations, which I expect of a new Africa, it is intuitive to work with both conceptualizations. It is this notion of ethnic purity that becomes the subject of manipulative and propagandist ethnocentrism. Ethno-nationalisms draw from such misinforming to foment conflicts and war, many of which engulf our continent today. The xenophobic attacks on other African nationals whose governments fought solidly beside anti-apartheid forces of South Africa become easy objects of the attack of some disgruntled South Africans whose anger against socio-economic injustice drive them to vent off so

brutally. Also, the African political landscape is corrupted by divisive ethnic sentiments such as those resulting in the ethnic cleansings of Burundi, Rwanda and Sudan. Not only are leaders manipulating the multiple localized ethnicities but they are doing so even at the sub-regional and regional levels.

During the early African liberation struggles, skin coloration and ethnicities did not matter; why should they matter now? Why should it matter when Arab, Black or Asian Africans suffer similar plight of deepening poverty, gross inequalities and stark rights abuses in a globalizing world? In this case, when skin colour and cultural background matters, we are denied the collective agency and bargaining power to act for change. Yet in some times, it should matter. It should matter in times when racialist and ethnocentric policies unduly discriminate and perpetuate injustices on some but not others. They should matter because it is only when those differences are acknowledged and worked with that we can unify the continent. They should matter because it is only when we can all see ourselves as Africans of diverse races and ethnicities who make and contribute to the development of the continent in diverse ways that the selective targeting of programmes and policies can be adopted to protect the vulnerable and at-risk while empowering all citizens. It is only through such that divisive sentiments can be set aside. Hence, in the new struggles and pan-Africanist movement we need to be guided by that notion and that history.

Additionally, it will appear that there is an aversion to modernity and insane fear of how it breaks from African traditions and destroys our cultural heritage and peoples. Founded on the notion of modernity as Westernization, this posturing justifiably provokes repulsive sentiments. This justification stems from multiple factors including the cultural alienation that accompanies the colonization process, sustains itself in developmentalism and globalization and which utilizes the tools of education, religion, trade and aid to expand and entrench its hold. Vilified as primitive, barbaric and uncivil, indigenous African cultural systems and practices continue to be considered blocks to development.

Pan-Africanism and African Regionalism

A century and one score ago, Africans and peoples of African descent saw a great need to build a united front in their struggle to restore African dignity and to liberate African nations from the shackles of colonialism. This move was possible even at that early stage and at a time not too far after European partitioning and colonization of the continent. The visionary leadership at the time understood the place of collective mobilization in a way that recognized not just the new divisions but also the emerging allegiances. It understood how such allegiances were planted to manipulate and set one group against the other. It also understood the political implications of not forging a common collective struggle in spite of the artificial borders and more importantly to not allow those borders to become barriers but weapons of negotiation and not conflict.

At the dawn of independence, there was certainty of what direction and form African liberation should take and clarity on doing so as a united Africa. Declarations such as “the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the total liberation of Africa,” made by the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, at the dawn of Ghana’s independence, demonstrates the desire at that point for a new Africa freed from its fragmented past. For political, economic and social reasons the nationalist leaders at the time such as Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda also imagined an Africa without its fractured and distorted past. Pan-Africanism was set as the agenda for not just liberating all of Africa and its splinter states but also positioning it as a powerful force in geopolitics. These pan-Africanist leaders, many of who became first presidents of their countries such as in Ghana, Kenya, Guinea and Nigeria, were wary of the weaknesses of balkanization and the need to de/balkanize the continent. Yet, they conceived this in the form of integration and cooperation such as the weakening of physical/artificial boundaries for the free flow of people and trade. Radical others such as Nkrumah of Ghana in his advocacy routed for not weakened but a borderless Africa in his proposal for the United States of Africa.^[6]
^{9]}To date, it is not too clear what a united Africa might mean. Hinged largely on leadership rather than people talk, the unity talks have depended on the dispositions of their leaders. It is however, clear that economic integration and sub-regional integration have stronger appeal. Although unclear what form and shape a debalkanized Africa would take, there was reason for unifying the fragmented and fractured continent whose political patronage rather than social history was shaping and continues to shape its very existence.

The proposal for the United States of Africa had as its elements economic, social, political and military elements. Economically, integration of markets and currencies was proposed. Socially, the collapse of artificial barriers for the free movements of people and goods was strong on the agenda. Politically, the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was a start while militarily the proposal for the establishment of the African High Command was intuitive. The extent to which each or all of these have been achieved is up for all of our judgement. What is clear is that over 50 years on, these issues are still up not for judgement but discussions. Ironically, the reality of our time suggests that we cannot hold off anymore. Nkrumah explained

this in no uncertain terms as follows: “We all want a United Africa, United not only in our concept of what unity connotes, but united in our common desire to move forward together in dealing with all the problem that can best be solved only on a continental basis.”^[20]

The reconstitution of the AU, the formation and strengthening of sub-regional unions such as ECOWAS of West Africa, SAEDC of Southern Africa and COMESA of Eastern and Southern African are pointers of the need to move more swiftly. Each of these constituencies has had to, at one time or another, respond to some crises or the other. Economic, political and social crises in countries like Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan, among others, have necessitated swift regional responses. In 2003, the Asmara Declaration proposed the adoption of regional languages that could assist in further integration. The East Africans and North Africans have done so well with Swahili and Arabic respectively but the same cannot be said of the rest of Africa. Hausa seems to hold promise for West Africa but actions to propel its adoption and use as a sub-regional language remains unclear. Hausa is spoken (also written) in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone and Cote D’Ivoire. With a stronger ECOWAS and the movement of peoples within the sub-region, my inclination is that the use of Hausa is spreading continually across the sub-region. These are strong indicators for unification which render hollow the continued hold on closed and weak nationalisms and especially so in a globalizing world. Ironically, such nationalisms are rooted in Westernism not only in the use of borrowed language such as English, French and Portuguese but also politics, trade and security.

Africa has had to stand up and respond in unison through regional or sub-regional bodies such as ECOMOG; the military arm of ECOWAS, which has responded to and helped curb crisis and maintained peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, among others. Over the years, the various sub-regional unions of West, Central, North, Southern and East Africa have become strengthened in response to their socio-economic and political welfare. The situations in Darfur, Southern Sudan and Somalia would have been still swirling without subregional mobilization and intervention. Cross-border movements for trade are also growing making it much easier to move within a subregion compared to across subregions. Short of common subregional currencies, relaxed border regulations allow people within their subregion to move more freely, trading with various convertible currencies. Such uninterrupted and well-managed internal and localized arrangements prepare the grounds for greater collaborations within and beyond the subregional groupings.

While Africa’s own internal conditions present their own challenges, happenings on the global scale make unification not only compelling but also strategic. The sporadic responses which have now been institutionalized to form more responsive bodies have become expedient in the face of increasing globalization. Call it African localization of globalization even as it becomes more and more integrated in the global world stage. A UNECA report confirms this:

The past two decades have witnessed a resurgence of regional integration groupings at a global level. The challenges of African development are compounded by the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, greater economic integration of financial and money markets, and a shift towards the creation of large trading and economic blocs. These developments offer not only challenges but also timely opportunities to Africa, and there is a need to broaden the concept of regionalism and to rethink Africa’s regional integration strategy.^[20]

While corroborating UNECA’s assertion, it is also the case that Africa has had its own agenda of integration from way back to the origins of the pan-Africanist project. There is need to return that project in order to respond more effectively and strategically to regional needs and global challenges. Apart from the USA model, there is now also the EU one that Africa can learn from as it returns to work on its pan-Africanist project. The EU in particular is fast redefining global development cooperation in the way that utilizes its regional structures as a powerful force in negotiations, at the same that the independent states maintain their sovereignty and bilateral relations. This does not only increase their influence in global politics and economics as a body but also opens opportunities for supporting and accelerating the development of weaker nations through regional trade, educational exchange and labour movement as well as policy regulations and governance mechanisms that benefit individual states and the regional body. In spite of the recent exit of Britain, which is already telling on the British economy and the growing insurgency of the far right movement headed by diehards like Marie Le Penn of France, the EU remains a strong force in the global economy. It remains a good example for challenging those who hold on to and use their various colonial allegiances and still hang on imperialist-drawn boundaries and egoistic sentiments to stall progress.

More and more African countries have had to deal with the EU rather than their traditional colonial benefactors resulting in cut backs on cooperation funds. The united front of the EU enabled it to break into the African front

to deal with individual nations at the time that the AU was building up steam against their Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The EU succeeded in foisting down their plans on individual African countries amid popular protests. The power of the euro today is another example. It remains one of three strong currencies of the world which continues to drive market trends its way. This glowing example was not lost to the pan-Africanists. Rather, it informed their project and indeed we also have our example of the mass liberation of African states in the 1960s. Ghana became an important power and inspirational site for not only nurturing the ideology but also training pan-Africanist nationalist leaders and a centre for mass mobilization. Zimbabwe and Tanzania did same for southern Africa in the struggle against apartheid. Resources and intelligence were mobilized all over Africa to support the anti-apartheid campaigners of South Africa in their struggles. It was Africa as a whole, rather than regional, national or ethnic groupings that mobilized to support a noble course to successfully overturn that brutal regime. It is sad that in today's Africa, nationalism and ethno-nationalism have become the basis for crippling the pan-Africanist project. Even within nations, ethnocentrism has become the mobilizing axis for genocide and constant conflict with dire consequences as in the case of Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda.

Yet, W.E. DuBois, the great pan-Africanist, foresaw this in the following:

If Africa unites, it will be because each part, each nation, each tribe gives up a part of the heritage for the good of the whole. That is what union means; that is what Pan Africa means: When the child is born into the tribe the price of his growing up is giving part of his freedom to the tribe. This he soon learns or dies. When the tribe becomes a union of the tribes, the individual tribe surrenders some part of its freedom to the paramount chief. ^[10]

This analogy should be familiar to any African who grew up in their roots. Even in the Diaspora, this notion of community has been employed to keep families and black people together. In migration, internal and external, we hold on to these time tested values. This is what Du Bois proposed a long time ago. Although he did not examine the situation of the chief who worked for the colonial governor like it happened in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria or the chief who raided, annexed, enslaved or even sold off neighbouring peoples in the coastal regions, he highlighted the principle of communalism and what it meant for individualism.

Some impediments to the Africa unity agenda has been the reluctance and even insecurities and suspicions of sovereign nations, what I call statism. Leaders, dating back to the early nationalist era, appear to have been more keen on guarding their national turfs rather than heed to forging a united Africa ^[21, 8]. Recent efforts to fast forward progress have been marked by such insinuations. At the 2007 AU summit in Accra, Africa was returned to the same old schisms of the 1960s which gave birth to the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs ^[13]. Today, we speak of the Instantists and gradualists or radicalist and conservatives. While the former categories are calling for a united Africa now, the latter want to steer a slow course. The latter group inclusive Kagame of Rwanda and Mkapa of Tanzania cited the same old tales of uncertainty, insecurity and diversity to stall progress while others including then Gaddafi of Libya and Wade of Senegal argued for unity now starting at sub-regional groupings and with those nations ready while working to include all. Today the two leaders are no more in government with Gaddafi brutally murdered by the allied forces.

Perhaps we need both radicalism and gradualism and not one or the other. Regional integration efforts that are steered by a radical declaration starting with some members and gradually including others worked for Europe, why not Africa? Even amid the far rightist decent and machinations, the EU still stands tall and firm. The fact that the recent EU challenge has been formulated and championed by rightist forces should send strong signals to the AU and its leadership to fast-track progress toward unity. No doubt that the forces of division and the local cronies will always work in oppositionality to dismantle progressive voices. An integrated Africa which looks within for market and aid threatens the West and even East as they increasingly depend on the unfair African market for the exploitation of resources. With a vision to: build an Africa that is integrated, prosperous and at peace, led by its citizens and constituted dynamic force on the world stage, anti-liberatory forces shudder. Come to think of it, why will the EU resort to lobbying individual African countries to foist its EPAs, when the AU, it parallel exists and can better negotiate for a united Africa?

Integration has always underpinned the pan-Africanist project, sometimes misconstrued and even misappropriated to serve the imperialist ends. Even in the very early times, some African leaders were convinced and believed that they were going to lose their positions to Nkrumah, the strongest and most radical advocate who was fast establishing his leadership as a likely candidate. Perhaps they looked to the United States of American model of one presidency. Without the smart EU model of a rotating presidency in view, there was nowhere else to look for lessons. So the fate of the proposed United States of Africa was squashed way too early

for the lack of useful lessons. Today, the new group of hesitant leaders are expressing similar fears out of what can be called the possible shortening of the newly found positions and the luxuries that attend them. A few years ago, it was the fear of Gaddafi's radical leadership. Yet, Gaddafi was the only North African leader who was committed to continental Africa after Anwar Sadat, who was himself brutally murdered, and perhaps Ben Bella. Gaddafi, who became a pan-Africanist firebrand for about a decade poured resources and rhetoric in the unity talks, himself has suffered a similar fate. The Sirte Declaration was an important step toward the reinvigoration of the unity talks^[11, 1]. Like Nkrumah the removal of Gaddafi was a victory for the gradualists. Above all, with big guns such as Gaddafi, Wade, Mbeki and Obasanjo no longer at the table, it is hard to say where the tables will turn. The current AU Commission chair, Dhlamini-Zuma, continues to push the agenda forward^[8] but to what end?

Yet, the truth is that pan-Africanism and African integration have been seriously misconstrued. The tenets of pan-Africanism of old and now suggest a blend of radicalism and gradualism. The model is simple: let's start now with those ready (radical) while gradually working to absorb others (gradualist). Africa needs a committed political agenda of change that works using both radical and gradual tactics. The establishments of economic, security and political institutions have always been viewed as the starting point for forging an African unity in the pan-African project. Nowhere in that project has it been stated or even suggested that a united Africa is a one nation Africa otherwise the proposal for the United States of Africa will not have made any sense. I say this bearing in mind the form that the United States of America has taken. Yet, I dare say so because Africa is not the Americas and has its own understanding of unity, one based on diversity. African socialism, which characterised post independence development and suffered similar misconstructions is an example. African communal living which was so aptly defined by Nyerere's Tanzania under Ujaama and Kenyatta's Kenya through Harambee were projects that understood that living. The working and sharing together as a community was not same as European Socialism or the Communalism of Marx and Mao.

In spite of its own implementation challenges, the implementation of Ujaama in Tanzania had made that country not the most affluent but an egalitarian country. The defiant Nyerere, unlike Kenyatta who succumbed too early to Western imperialist pressures and unlike Nkrumah, whose Conscientization mission was cut short through military action, succeeded in building a society that Tanzanians found worthy. Tanzania adopted Ki-Swahili, an indigenous language with blends of Arabic and European influences. Also, Tanzania's Arab population who like their German colonizers had delivered their own doses of violence on the indigenous Africans, were not thrown out or even sidelined. Nyerere worked tirelessly to unite the island of Zanzibar with Tanganyika in order to build the union of Tanzania. The benefits have not been only the delivery of freedoms and liberties for all but also the high levels of parity especially in the area of gender but also in ethnicity and class. These are useful examples for African unity in this globalizing world.

In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah embarked on radical socio-economic programmes in the form of educational expansion, health delivery, infrastructural development and industrial development that were aimed at accelerating progress while challenging imperialist policies and programmes. The defiant Nkrumah, like Nyerere, insisted on import substitution industrialization and the building of infrastructure that would increase internal and regional autonomy. His political agenda of conscientization tackled neo-colonialism head on through education and training at the same time that his pan-Africanist activism was strongly articulated at continental fora and the world stage. This sowed the seeds of the fear that gripped fellow African leaders and local Ghanaian opposers as well as paved the way for the imperialist manipulations that resulted in his fall and eventual demise. A similar political project was carried out in Franco-Africa by leaders who understood the dehumanizing outcomes of the denationalization efforts of the French colonialists. Scholars like Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal and leaders like Sekou Toure of Guinea ought tirelessly to restore African dignity and citizenship while recovering African values and identities through the Negritude movement^[13, 8]. The African humanism agenda of the Negritude served to restore African dignity and forge a unified struggle for liberation.

Today, African leaders have adopted what they call a gradualist approach, which is based on the strengthening of sub-regional cooperation for the eventual integration at the continental level. This cannot be considered a radical deviation from the radical position. The only disjuncture is in implementation. The OAU has metamorphosed into the AU yet has not been weaned of its traditional sloppiness. The AU maintains its tradition of slowly responding to African needs and accelerating the pace of integration. While our leaders openly express strong need to unify, this has also been marred by a slowness to action. It still lacks the impetus to call irate leaders to order or even sanction when necessary. Today the sub-regional unions are much stronger but the same cannot be said of the regional union and the integration efforts. African states and leaders continue to make pledges which they persistently neglect to honour. They are quick to heed to western pressures at the expense of the continental union agenda. A case in point is the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which it has tried to shove down the throats of African nations.

While debates were widespread and calls were being made by subregional and regional groups of civil society and political unions, nations like Ghana, Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire were quick to succumb and nothing has been done to them. That a huge country like Nigeria with the benefits of a large internal market, wide range of resources, oil power and political stability should kowtow to external pressure can only be considered an irony. Nigeria should be standing shoulder to shoulder with any world nation such as the USA for the Americas and UK and Germany for Europe by leading the African region in its development rather than pan-handling for resources and aid! African unity will remain mere rhetoric without such leadership; yet each time a leader seems to appear fears rather than good sense takes over. The cases of Nkrumah and Gaddafi are evident. A Nobel prize, the late Wangari Maathai of Kenya, had affirmed the African unity leadership crisis during an Eminent Persons Round Table on the opening day of the Pan African Media Conference in Nairobi in March 2010 by pointing out that Africa lacks visionary leadership. This should be understood to mean a selfless and forward looking leadership committed to making bold decisions to change that moves Africa ahead. Such a leader should be able to blend African traditions with the offerings of the contemporary world and dare to speak out and be different.

Amoako (2010) in his appeal for expediting action on African unity explained:

We know that with renewed political impetus, it is important that we also take a candid and critical look at our record, in order to make our shared aspirations of the African Union a concrete reality. Why has African unity fallen so far short of its early promise? Let me offer a few of the key reasons. For one thing, political commitments of member states to regional plans have far too often not been translated into national policies and action. For another, national policies have conspired against a higher degree of private sector-driven regional integration, resulting in low levels of intra-regional as well as inter-regional trade. On the institutional side, the integration agreements have contributed little to the higher levels of industrial growth envisaged for the continent's development. Overlapping memberships of the regional economic communities have worked against the overall exacerbated objective. And let us not forget that in every subregion, endemic political instability exacerbated by persistent conflict has undermined the effectiveness of regional integration.^[20]

Amoako speaks eloquently on the challenge of African unity that illuminates the core of the problem. Continually, African leaders make commitments but do not act on them. The unity now (radical) or later (gradual) seems to have become yet another tradition. Yet, this is far from the sense of tradition offered by Shankar.^[17] After over 50 years of political independence, the unity efforts have not been able to go past the gradualist tradition, as excuses upon excuses are offered to delay action. Excuses such as the building of internal structures, strengthening of sub-regional unions and need for a well-thought out strategy have remained on the discussion table for far too long. During a press encounter in March 2010, hosted by ALL Africa Global Media, the majority of participating leaders, political and civil, although agreed on the need for integration were absorbed in demonstrating and protecting their national interests. Presidents Kagame, Odinga and Mkapa, in their responses to questions on African unity concentrated on explaining how their nations were fairing rather than how they were working toward African unity. Some kind of lip-service was paid to the unification efforts by suggesting stronger commitments to individual nationalisms. To be fair, there are tangible reasons that need lots of work but should they block progress? In the case of Europe, they did not have to be at the same level to establish the EU! Why should Africans seek to level the ground even before the unification takes place when the point of unification is to help with such levelling of some sort? Is it not the same fears raised above that are gripping the current crop of leaders and even the older ones in these globalizing times when integration is inevitable? This is a postcolonial challenge in a stage of the rapid integration instanced by globalization and developmentalism.

African Futures and the Postcolonial Challenge

The postcolonial has been defined diversely to include a blending of the pre-modern, modern and beyond. As a discursive project, it doubts projects that offer uncritical universalizing positions, conclusions and judgements. Rather, it challenges and explores possibilities for constant contestation and confrontation meant to open up discourse, offer fresh insights and expand possibilities and opportunities. It thus challenges all majorities and minorities, metropolises and dependences, superordinates and subordinates to exercise agency in interrogating and contesting their positions in their bid to re-shape and improve meaning and responses. As argued by some scholars, postcolonial criticisms contribute "epistemic, knowledge frameworks and material insights to hegemonic power relations, and in particular global violence" by specifically raising questions with the divisive retrogressive geopolitics and its implications for various subjects. It is this challenge that should appeal to African leaders.^[3]

The African unity efforts can benefit from the postcolonial challenge by not just offering the space for interrogating and contesting imperialists spaces to unveil their implications in Africa's development challenges but by also illuminating existing discourses and opening them up for fresh meanings for charting new courses and building strategic alliances. Also, it will enable Africa to embrace the blending of the traditional and modern as equally valuable and legitimate spaces for participating strategically in the globalizing world. It will afford the embracing of both in ways that are mutually reinforcing so that as Shankar (2010) asserts the modern can become an emerging tradition. It will help set that debate aside for the good of Africa.

Meanwhile, the seeming oppositionality between the gradualists and instantists, radicals and conservatives, remains worrying. However, a third way is emerging that seems to hold promise, if only it does not suffer the same paralysis that often holds and keeps down radical ideas for change in Africa. During the 2007 AU summit in Accra, Prime Minister Meles Zenawe was quoted to have said that: "there is only one position, of the practicalists," in an emotional response to the schism around Gradualism and Instantism. What is that practicalism, opted by that Zenawe? Could it be the same pragmatism offered by Nyerere? The practical realities of Africa in the form of poverty, disease and inequalities amid affluence and vast resource endowments require practical action and rightly so. But is it not the case that a united African would help leverage those iniquities? Africans and African leaders must act with conviction and one voice in order to stem the tide of the ever present imperialism and underdevelopment that continue to undermine and erode progress. Africans must challenge yet work with tradition and modernity toward purposive ends that respond to African needs collectively and individually, now and the future. This is a postcolonial offering.

At the 2007 Accra Summit, the participating leaders concluded on setting a time table for the "realistic but radical integration process"^[12]. The following year in Addis Ababa, at the heads of State meeting, this position was given further reaffirmation. About a decade down the line, the story remains the same, at least from the outside. For how long can Africa maintain the rhetoric? When will Africa ever be ready to take action and swiftly too? A Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, Lalla Ben Barka corroborated Zenawe's position as follows:

I strongly believe that Pan-Africanism is even more relevant today than it was in the 1960s. Then, it was necessarily visionary but it was this very idealism that served to limit Pan-Africanism to a dream, limiting its scope and to a large extent derailing it. When the hard reality of development set in, the ideals of Pan-Africanism were quietly forgotten and were put on shelf to gather dust. Yet, Africa's place as an equal partner at the global table can only be assured if it thinks and acts regionally.^[20]

Ben Barka sums up the urgency of regionalism today but also the weak responses to Pan-Africanism as the bane. What is evident, in view of the present dire socio-economic conditions, which have been blamed largely on the injustices that Africa has suffered in terms of unfair trade relations and incriminating donor conditionalities, is the need for radical change.

As we move on, I will like to re-echo the lessons from the past in the form of the traditions set by the pan-Africanist and early nationalists. I also want to state that Africa cannot afford to snail walk in the face of the challenges of these times. Want it or not the peoples of Africa, fortunately, and not the leaders, unfortunately, are breaking the barriers. This sounds the warning bells for the wake up. The people move when they find sites of prosperity. Ghana and Nigeria and now South Africa are hotspots for people movement on the continent. I am impressed by how Ki-Swahili had made it possible for people within the East African community to move freely to seek better career fortunes within the region. I have also been horrified by the mass and xenophobic outbursts in South Africa, which resulted in the wanton destruction of life and the properties of fellow Africans. Unfortunately, those who suffered in South Africa were blacks and not whites; many were citizens of nations that hosted anti-Apartheid leaders during their struggles.

I want to invite us to return to the founding ideological traditions. In Ujaama and Harambee we find communal living models that promote egalitarianism and exemplary leadership. If well implemented good governance can be promoted. Conscientization will empower people to think Africa and claim an African nationalism that is based on Africa for Africans. In Negritude, we find a citizenship model that is based on Africanist identities; open, warm and welcoming. These ideologies are up for exploration for building the economic, political and social integration, regional and unification models that are African-centred but are also appreciative of a new Africa that stands for growth and progress for and with the people; the masses. It should withstand the challenges of globalization and developmentalism while fulfilling the postcolonial promise of a truly liberated Africa. Above all, it is rooted in pan-Africanist ideals.

The debate has been further inspired by Nyerere (1997: 276) who admonished African leaders thus:

This is my plea to the new generation of African leaders and African people: work for unity with the firm conviction that, without unity there is no future for Africa. That is, of course, if we still want to have a place in the sun. I reject the glorification of the nation-state, which we have inherited from colonialism, and the artificial nations we are trying to forge from that inheritance. We are all Africans trying to be Ghanaians or Tanzanians. Fortunately for Africa we have not been completely successful ... Unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated. And it will therefore increase the effectiveness of the decisions we make and try to implement for our development.^[12]

Nyerere spoke from hindsight and from the experience of sitting at the same table with Nkrumah and all the pioneer leaders. About three decades later he was in a better position to admonish current African leaders. But did they listen and will they ever listen. African unity continues to hang in a balance while African nations continue to wallow in their old problems.

Conclusion

The paper has entailed a critical reflection on the African unity challenge. It has examined the perennial challenge confronting African leadership effort to unify the continent for effective socio-economic integration. It traces the history of African unity to the 1960s efforts by the early independence nationalists such as Nkrumah of Ghana and Nyerere of Tanzania. It reveals that African colonialist and neo-colonial allegiances to the imperialist past has been a bane to progress on African Unity. It has drawn from diverse sources to show that debates around gradualism and instantism have historical roots traceable to past colonial history and an enduring neo-colonial present but also internal factors around the parochial interests of nationhood/statism and indivisible political interests. It explains that the challenges of the past, at the onset of pan-Africanism in Africa continue to plague the continent. However, no matter the persuasions or dispositions of the African leaders, who have tended to dominate and drive the discourse over their nationals, the unity talks remain relevant. The socio-economic exigencies of today, spurred on through globalization and developmentalism, which rob Africa of its human and material resources, compel a continued pursuit of African unity devoid of the divisiveness that continues to cripple and debilitate progress. It views the efforts at the subregional levels as useful pointers of the possibility for unity. It argues that the benefits accruing from military and economic mobilization in times of crisis and development can be extended to help with the continental integration. Hence, we cannot remain content with the successes at that level only. It suggests that both instantist and gradualist positions are relevant but that their integration is the only way of levelly the ground for expedited socio-economic progress of the nation states and the continent; citing the EU model as suited for the African case. However, such borrowing need to reflect the early pan-Africanist ideals of multiplexity and diversity and build on the ideologies of conscientization, ujaama, harambee and negritude.

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